

English Language Teaching through ICT Tools and Mobile Phones

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ABSTRACT

The biggest challenge faced by any teacher of the English language is to find the tools that help engage the students in the classroom. Students seem to display a lack of interest and apathy when learning the language. They are often caught playing on their mobile phones during the class. The phones that distract the students can, however, be used by them as a learning tool.

Keywords: ICT tools in language learning; using mobile phones in language learning; active engagement of students.

Introduction

Teaching is a complex, challenging and creative task. Predictable and traditional methods of teaching disengage the students, making them lose interest in learning. Figuratively, most of the younger generation seem to be handcuffed to their mobile phones. They often attend lectures in college without their notebooks or textbooks, but they never fail to carry their mobile phones with them at all times. Though many colleges in India have laid down a rule that states that students should keep their mobile phones in silent mode or switched off, teachers often notice students stealing a look at their mobile phones under their desks. With permission from the upper management, mobile phones and smart boards are now being used to teach English

in our classrooms. When ICT tools and mobile phones are used in teaching, they promote peer contact, and improve collaborative and interactive learning among students.

Sample Activities

1. Students were asked to watch YouTube videos of an interview with Sid Sriram, a renowned singer and Youth Icon. They were asked to observe the way he spoke with a strong American accent, but when he sang, he pronounced Tamil and Telugu words correctly.
2. Students were shown international advertisements (Christmas, Black Friday, and Thanksgiving Sale) for shampoos and soaps, and in small groups they were asked to customise the

advertisements to appeal to an Indian audience.

3. Students were asked to use their mobile phones (activity conducted in pairs) to record a dialogue set in a formal context (for example, the opening of a bank account, a mock interview, and so on). They were encouraged to play it back to help them identify and correct any errors.
4. Students were asked to write in Instagram and Blogger. They were given the opportunity to voice their views on a medium that is highly interactive. They received instant feedback from their friends.
5. Students were shown short movies and video clippings, and were asked to discuss and write reviews. (Group activity)
6. Students were asked to have a Skype conversation with their friends or relatives living abroad.

Challenges Faced

- a. Watching the video clippings and movies seemed to interest the students. The response was tremendous when they were asked to discuss what they had seen. However, the students were

reluctant to take up written activities, such as writing a review or a blog. Very few students participated in this.

- b. Live streaming was interrupted during the Skype sessions because of technical issues.
- c. These activities seemed to work well and produce the expected results when the strength of the class was smaller, around 15 to 20 students.

Conclusion

Smart boards, computers, and mobile phones are effective learning tools if the teacher is imaginative and creative. English teachers have to keep updating their knowledge base constantly in order to be relevant and useful in the present-day classrooms. Teaching materials and methods have to progress and change to match the changing world.

References

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